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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ROME 001187

NOFORN
SIPDIS

EO 12958 DECL: 10/23/2026
TAGS PGOV, PREL, IT
SUBJECT: ITALY: SCANDALS TAKING TOLL ON BERLUSCONI'S
PERSONAL AND POLITICAL HEALTH

REF: ROME 1143
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Classified By: Ambassador David H. Thorne for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C/NF) SUMMARY. Though PM Berlusconi's parliamentary majority is strong, and nobody is yet willing to predict his political demise, a growing PRIVATE MATTERS WEIGHING ON BERLUSCONI

2. (SBU) After a long hot spring and summer of personal and professional scandals, PM Berlusconi, returning from the August recess appeared br

3. (C/NF) Two officials XXXXXXXXXXXX in separate conversations with the Embassy, recently described the Prime Minister in strikingly similar t

4. (C/NF) XXXXXXXXXXXX termed Berlusconi overwhelmed with private concerns. He noted that Berlusconi has felt alienated from his family since LEADING TO CONSPIRACY THEORIES

5. (C/NF) A number of Embassy contacts have described a political environment dominated by conspiracy theories. In the wake of the two court r ROME 00001187 002.2 OF 003

6. (C/NF) XXXXXXXXXXXX confided that Berlusconi believes the Italian intelligence services might have deliberately entrapped him in his allege

7. (C/NF) In a replay of the foreign press-induced scandals of last spring and summer, a London Times article accusing Italian troops in Afghe AND PALACE INTRIGUE

8. (C/NF) One of Berlusconi's would-be heirs, Chamber of Deputies President Gianfranco Fini, picked one of his periodic fights with Berlusconi AS WELL AS ERRATIC DECISIONS

9. (C/NF) Media mogul Berlusconi might be gaffe-prone when speaking off the cuff, but he has historically shown himself astute at strategic me COMMENT

10. (C/NF) Sex scandals, criminal investigations, family problems and financial concerns appear to be weighing heavily on Berlusconi's persona ROME 00001187 003.2 OF 003
his decision-making ability. It is too early to begin speculating about Berlusconi's political demise, and Berlusconi has a well-known knack for